United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General to send his Special Envoy, Cyrus Vance, on fact-finding mission to Nagorno-Karabakh to gather information about "grave situation" in that region.

+ Secretary-General to send technical team to Mogadiscio to prepare the United Nations monitoring mechanism of cease-fire and to seek insurance for unimpeded humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in that city.

+ British actress Julie Andrews named Goodwill Ambassador for United Nations Development Fund for Women.

+ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East protests harassment on its staff by Israeli security forces.

+ Question of equality between the sexes should not be separated from debates on new world order, development, democracy, peace and social justice, Women's Commission in Vienna is told by Director of Division for Advancement of Women.

+ Force Commander of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia to inspect facilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to deploy advance contingents to protected areas.

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A United Nations spokesman announced today that Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali would send his Special Envoy, Cyrus Vance, on a mission to Nagorno-Karabakh to gather information about the "grave situation" in that region. The mission is expected to leave in a few days.

In a telegram today to the President of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Jiri Dienstbier, the Secretary-General said Mr. Vance would go to the cities of Yerevan and Baku, in Armenia and Azerbaijan. He said the situation called "for a concerted effort to prevent further violence and to create the conditions for a peaceful solution".

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For information media--not an official record

The Secretary-General has sent cables to the President of Armenia and the acting President of Azerbaijan, calling on both sides to show maximum restraint and to seek an end to what he described as the "cycle of violence which has gripped the region".

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Describing the situation in Somalia as "extraordinarily complex" -- one which has so far "eluded conventional solutions", Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali says he intends to dispatch a technical team, as soon as possible, to Mogadiscio to prepare an operational plan for a United Nations "monitoring mechanism" to oversee the fragile cease-fire agreed upon on 3 March.

The team will consist of about 20 civilian and military personnel, together with the representatives of the three regional organizations involved in efforts to solve the conflict in Somalia -- the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

In his report to the Security Council, dated 11 March, the Secretary-General says the team will pursue consultations with the two parties -- Interim President Mohamed and General Aideed -- on the arrangements for the UN monitoring. The team will also discuss how to ensure that the cease-fire is respected by armed elements which are not under control of either of the two protagonists. Mr. Boutros-Ghali emphasizes that the UN monitoring mechanism will need the full approval of the Security Council before it can be implemented.

It is the Secretary-General's intention that the technical team also investigates how to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons in and around Mogadiscio. He says that in the light of immediate threat posed by severe food shortages to the country's population, the relief programme should "not necessarily be dependent upon the cease-fire". But, he notes, such a relief programme "can not be undertaken without adequate measures to ensure the safety of relief officials".

The Security Council has held consultations on the subject this afternoon. (S.23693)

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The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has announced that British actress Julie Andrews has been named Goodwill Ambassador for the Fund by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Ms Andrews will travel to promote the work of UNIFEM which provides financial and technical support to low-income women in developing countries. The Fund also finances activities that enable women to participate in

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mainstream development programmes and decision-making. The actress' first mission will be to travel to developing countries where she will meet women involved in UNIFEM programmes.

UNIFEM will hold a press conference to introduce Ms. Andrews at 11:00 AM on 19 March at United Nations Headquarters, after which she will meet with the Secretary-General.

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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has protested to the Israeli authorities over an incident in Ramallah, West Bank, on 12 March, in which border police threw a sound bomb and tear-gas canister in the direction of two UNRWA staff members.

The incident occurred after an UNRWA international official and her assistant, on duty in Ramallah, came upon a clash between local residents and Israeli border police. Both were severely affected by a tear-gas canister fired over their heads from a distance of approximately two metres. The UNRWA official required treatment at Ramallah hospital and was later released.

UNRWA's Field Office in the West Bank immediately protested to the Civil Administration and today, UNRWA headquarters made a démarche to the Israeli Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Vienna requesting that the incident be investigated with a view to preventing harassment of UNRWA personnel in the future.

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The question of the equality of the sexes could not be separated from the debates on the new world order, development, democracy, peace and social justice, said Chafika Meslem, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, as she opened the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in Vienna, yesterday.

A major purpose of the session, she continued, was to consider how the international community would deal with the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995.

The Commission elected by acclamation Mervat Tallawy (Egypt) as its Chairman. It also concluded debate on programming and coordination matters related to the United Nations and the United Nations system.

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The Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), Lieutenant-General Satish Nambiar, left Zagreb for Sarajevo this morning. He was expected to inspect the facilities at the proposed main logistics base at Banja Luka in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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On Saturday, he will fly to Belgrade where some 500 advance infantry and support elements have been arriving since yesterday. He will formally welcome the advance contingents on Sunday, before deploying them Monday to the United Nations Protection Areas where they will conduct detailed reconnaissance in preparation for the 14,000-man full Force.

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